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TWO STUDIES OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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The current essays to disentangle the literary history of the material which now forms our Gospel of Mark were described in an article by Professor Moulton in a recent number of this *Review*.¹ Of the attempts to solve the problem there mentioned two seem plausible enough to warrant fuller exposition in these pages. They are the reconstructions by which Professor Hermann von Soden,² of Berlin, and Professor Emil Wendling,³ of Zabern, have tried to resolve our Gospel into its constituent elements.

Von Soden begins by distinguishing two strands of narrative, so easily separable on grounds both of matter and style that the great differences between them betray two different sources of the material. As the clearest instance of the earlier strand, he takes the passage Mk. 2 1-3 6, which he contrasts with 4 35-5 43. In the former passage all the interest is centred in the words of Jesus, in the latter in the events themselves. "Let one," he says, "compare the story of the Gadarene demoniac, with its twenty verses, and the debate about fasting, with its five verses, and estimate the religious value of the thought expressed in the two sections." Similarly, the sections Mk. 7 32-37 and 8 22-26 (the healing of the deaf man and of the blind man) are quite distinct in character from such stories as those in 2 1-12 and 3 1-6. "In the former the miracle of healing is itself the subject of the representation; in the latter the miracle is merely a part of the story, the real subject of which is Jesus' forgiveness of sins and his violation of the Sabbath laws."

In this way Von Soden picks out his "*Kernstücke*." To these certainly belong the group of narratives in 1 21-39, 2 1, 3 6,

¹ "The Relation of the Gospel of Mark to Primitive Christian Tradition," *Harvard Theological Review*, III (1910), 403-436.

² *Die wichtigsten Fragen im Leben Jesu*. 1904.

³ *Urmarcus*. 1905. See also *Die Entstehung des Marcusevangeliums*. 1908.

12 13-44, 3 20-35, 6 1-6, 4 1-8, 4 26-32, 10 13-31; perhaps also 7 24-30, 6 14-16, 1 4-11. To these narratives, which go back to Peter, may also belong the brief notices concerning the stages of growth of the apostolic circle in 1 16-20, 3 13-19, 6 7-13, 8 27-9 1, 9 33-40, 13 9-13. To these passages Von Soden adds 13 1-6, 28-37. And he says that at the basis of the story of the days in Jerusalem, 11 1-12 12, and the passion narrative in chapters 14 and 15 lie narratives of a similar style, but he does not include the latter in his "*Kernstücke*."

The passages thus referred to Peter, or to the Petrine tradition, Von Soden prints in full, "undisturbed by all that our Gospel of Mark has interwoven with them."⁴ The result is extremely interesting. The Petrine nucleus of the Gospel appears as follows:

John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus.

A Sabbath in Capernaum.

The offence of the Jews at Jesus' forgiveness of sins, at his association with sinners, at his breaking of the Sabbath, and at the fact that his disciples do not fast.

The attempt of the Jews to take him.

How Jesus meets the general misunderstanding.

Parables about the kingdom of God.

The question who shall enter that kingdom.

The development of the apostolic circle.

Glimpses into the future.

This certainly makes (after some readjustment in the order of certain of the sections) a remarkably straightforward and connected narrative. Von Soden's remarks concerning it are well worth quoting:

These narratives are without any embellishment or secondary interest. They are plastic and concrete in every feature. The local coloring is strikingly fresh, and yet is in no way artificial. No edifying remarks, no reflections; only deeds and striking sayings. No story requires its secret meaning to be explained by symbol or allegory. In no one of them does one feel any occasion to inquire for the meaning, which is always perfectly obvious. Situations and words are too original to have been invented. Everything breathes the odor of Palestine. Not a

⁴ For reasons which he does not explain he somewhat rearranges the sections.

reminiscence of Old Testament stories. Miracles appear only here and there, and incidentally. . . . The christological or soteriological question never constitutes the motive of a story. Not once is there any expression from the language of the schools; especially not from that of Paul. Words and sentences are reminiscent of the Aramaic. The figure of Jesus itself bears in every reference a human outline. He is stirred and astonished; he is angry and trembles; he needs recuperation, and feels himself forsaken of God. He will not have the thoughtless, conventional designation "good" addressed to him, and confesses that he does not know when all that he sees to be approaching shall be fulfilled. His mother and brothers fear that he may be out of his mind. This and much else is told in the simplest possible way. So Jesus lived; so he expressed himself; thus they received him; thus the apostolic circle was formed and developed—this is what the writer will tell.

It must be admitted that these sections of Mark have a very primitive character, and so far as their content is concerned might well go back to the Petrine tradition.

With these sections Von Soden contrasts the remaining parts of the Gospel, in which he finds not only much interruption of the primary narrative, but much interpretation, much allegorizing, much absence of actual situations, much reminiscence of Old Testament stories, much influence from Paul, and many reflections of the experiences of individual Christians and the Christian church. No one can work through this analysis without feeling that it is easy to distinguish between primary and secondary elements in the Gospel of Mark, and that Von Soden has at least pointed out many of the junctures between the two.

The critical analysis of Wendling is still more thoroughgoing. The basis of his discussion is the fourth chapter of Mark, where he thinks the primary and secondary material most easy to separate. Mark 4:1-9, 26-33, belong to the original. Verses 10-25 are later, having been inserted mechanically, yet so as to respect the older text; they have no organic connection with the rest of the chapter and even contradict its situation. Jesus is teaching from a boat, and other boats are with his; then, without indication of change of scene, in verses 10-25 he is alone with his disciples, who ask him the meaning of the parable of the sower. He gives his explanation, and, again without any

indication of change of situation, is in the boat, surrounded by the other boats, and the storm comes up and is stilled.

Moreover, this insertion (4 10-25) expresses theories of its author quite inconsistent with those of the writer of other parts of the Gospel. In other places Jesus speaks to all the people in parables "as they were able to hear him." He stretches out his hand over the crowd and says, "These are my mother and my sisters." He is the teacher of the multitude, who understand him better than his own family. There is nothing in his parables that needs explaining. But in 4 10-25 the theory of the writer is that the parables are "mysteries," enigmas which not only require to be explained (by the allegorical method), but are spoken for the express purpose of preventing the people from understanding. Indeed, without the key which Jesus gives, even the disciples do not understand them. Pauline influence is also obvious.⁵

Besides the interruptions of the narrative, two clews are thus given by which the work of a second writer may be detected. He has the "*Geheimnistheorie*" of the parables, and he has in thought and vocabulary reminiscences of the Pauline school. Applying these tests to another section which seems to interrupt the narrative where it stands, Wendling adds a second insertion, 3 22-30. This is the passage containing the controversy about Beelzebub, and it comes in inappropriately between vss. 20, 21, which introduce, and vs. 31, which continues, the story of Jesus' family who have come to take him home. It seems to have been inserted in this place because the Pharisees likewise said, "He hath a devil." By repeating in vs. 30 the words ἔλεγον ὅτι which he found in vs. 21, the redactor or evangelist preserves for the continuation of the original story precisely the same connection it would have had without his interpolation; and by the use of the same words in vs. 22 he connects the interpolation with the opening narrative. His hand is to be seen in the superfluous repetition of words, especially in the repetition of the subject, as in 3 24, 25.⁶

⁵ Note especially the words μυστήριον, μετὰ χαρᾶς λαμβάνειν, διωγμός, ἐπιθυμίαι, καρποφορεῖν, and see Wendling, Urmarcus, p. 35, note 11.

⁶ Cf. 2 19^b, 20, also the work of Ev.

To these two insertions is added a third, Mk. 3 6-19. The motives running through this section are copied from narratives in other chapters. It contains much generalization and interpretation, both of which are marks of the work of the redactor or evangelist (Ev). It also refers to his "*Geheimnistheorie*."

Another is 1 34^b ("he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him") on account of the implication in it of the same theory. Mk. 1 45 also does not fit where it is; the connection without it is good; it too implies the theory of the writer (part of his "*Geheimnistheorie*") that the more Jesus told people not to proclaim him the more they did so, and the more he tried to seclude himself the more they found him.

With these, again, on somewhat different grounds, and not so certainly, belong the little group of loosely strung sayings which are found in 6 7-11, 8 34-9 1, 9 40-50, 10 42-45, 11 23-25, 12 38-40, 13 9-13. The ground for assuming these to be additions is that these sayings are not closely connected in the passages in which they occur, and that they share this characteristic with the similar group of disconnected sayings in the first and best attested interpolation, 4 21-25.

In 1 1-3, 14^b, 15, the word *εἰαγγέλιον* arouses a natural suspicion. The same word occurs in four other places (8 35, 10 29, 13 10, 14 9), all of which are in passages which are suspicious upon other grounds. Consequently, with the three instances in chapter 1, they are to be ascribed to Ev.

With the exception of the interpolation in 4 10-25, the section 1 16-4 33 appears to be a unit, and belongs to the oldest stratum. But with 4 35, says Wendling, begins a new section, easily distinguished from that just mentioned. It copies the motives and characteristics of other sections.⁷ The writer is to be discriminated, however, not merely from the writer of the earliest stratum, but from the author of the insertions already identified. None of the criteria of the latter's manner appear in the author of the section beginning at 4 35. He shows no trace of Pauline conceptions, has none of Jesus' prohibitions to the demons, his "*Heimlichkeit*" is of a different sort, and goes back to Old

⁷ Cf. 5 2 with 1 23; 5 6, 7 with 1 24; 5 8-13 with 1 25; 5 13 with 1 26; 5 14-17 with 1 27, and see Wendling, Urmarcus, p. 11.

Testament exemplars. Since the insertion in 4 10-25 presupposes the story of the storm on the lake in 4 35-5 43, this latter is older than the former. The writer of this section, 4 35-5 43, therefore stood between the writer of the original strand and the evangelist or redactor. The last writer (Ev) worked over the combined work of his two predecessors.

To the author who is intermediate between the first writer and the evangelist (M^2) Wendling assigns twenty-nine different sections, some of considerable length and some of only a verse or part of a verse. They are as follows: 1 4-14^a, 4 35-5 42, 5 43^b, 6 14, 17-30, 35-44, 9 2-8, 14-27, 10 46-11 10, 14 12-20, 26-35^a, 36-37, 39-41^a, 42, 47, 51-56, 60-62^a, 63, 64, 66-72, 15 16-20, 23, 24^b, 25, 29-30, 33, 34^b-36, 38, 40-43, 46-16 7^a, 8—about 200 verses or parts of verses in all.

The contributions of the author of the Gospel (Ev) are more extensive than those of his predecessor. They comprise: 1 1-3, 14^b-15, 34^b, 39^b, 45, 2 15^b-16^a, 18^a, 19^b-20, 3 6-19, 22-30, 4 10-25, 30-32, 34, 5 43^a, 6 1-13, 15, 16, 30-31, 45-8 26, 30^b-33^a, 33^c-35, 38-9 1, 9-13, 28-50, 10 2-12, 24, 26-30, 32^b-34, 38-40, 45, 11 11-14, 18-25, 27^a, 12 14^b, 32-34^a, 38-44, 13 3-27, 30-32, 37, 14 8, 9, 21, 35^b, 38, 41^b, 57-59, 62^b, 15 39, 44, 45, 16, 7^b—in all about 270 verses or parts of verses.

This leaves to the original writer (M^1) the following sections: 1 16-34^a, 35-39^a, 40-44, 2 1-15^a, 16^b-17, 18^b, 19^a, 21-3 5, 20, 21, 31-4 9, 26-29, 33, 6 32-34, 8 27-30^a, 33^b, 36, 37, 10 1, 13-23, 25, 31-32^a, 35-37, 41-44, 11 15-17, 27^b-12 14^a, 14^c-31, 34^b-37, 13 1-2, 28-29, 33-36, 14 1-7, 10, 11, 22-25, 43-46, 48-50, 65, 15 1-15, 21, 22, 24^a, 26-27, 31-32, 34^a, 37,—in all about 212 verses or parts of verses.⁸

Wendling calls the writers of these three strands M^1 , M^2 , and Ev. Printing the texts of the first and second writers, M^1 and M^2 , without rearrangement but with the omission of all matter assigned to Ev, he finds them to make a continuous story, well connected and without breaks. As to whether M^1 alone makes such a story, he is in doubt; and therefore as to whether

⁸ In the *Entstehung des Marcus-Evangeliums* (p. 204) Wendling arranges the verses from M^1 in chapters 13 and 14 as follows: 13 1-2, 33, 28-29, 34-36, 14 1-2, 10-11, 3-7, 22-25, 43-46, 48-50, 65. Some minor differences in the analysis, affecting words or clauses, are registered *ibid.*, p. 237.

M^2 found M^1 as a connected discourse or himself first assembled the sections of it in connection with his own additions. The passion story of M^1 by itself seems to be a connected account; it may therefore be assumed that so much of M^1 was found by M^2 as a whole and in its present order. Further, since the work of Ev in the passion story is so slight, it is to be assumed that the combination of M^1 and M^2 in this story was more carefully done than in many other parts, and also that for this part of the gospel history Ev possessed very few traditions which had not already been embodied in $M^1 + M^2$. This would agree with the natural assumption that the earliest part of the gospel tradition to be carefully treasured would be that relating to Jesus' death, and that only later was the attempt made to preserve with equal care the story of his whole public career.

When one remembers the fine-spun analyses of the historical books of the Old Testament, which, long ridiculed for their elaborateness, have finally been accepted by most scholars, one hesitates on this account alone to pronounce an adverse judgment upon Wendling's theory. Yet his analysis certainly seems to be over-elaborate. It is, indeed, helpful to the student of the Gospel to distinguish between the more obvious work of Ev and the earlier document (or material) upon which he worked. All students will feel this with reference to chapter 4, and the advantage in chapter 3 is perhaps only less great. Still more welcome is the assignment of 6 45-8 27 to Ev . The particular stumbling-block of this section is its feeding of the four thousand, so manifestly copied from the feeding of the five thousand. That one and the same author should have written both these accounts has seemed strange to many readers. But this duplication is as easily disposed of upon Von Soden's theory as upon Wendling's. Von Soden's analysis into two strata (without the assumption of two *writers*) is much simpler than Wendling's analysis into three, representing not merely different strata of tradition, as in Von Soden's hypothesis, but different *writers*. Wendling's theory is more secure where it goes with Von Soden's, and less convincing where it goes beyond it. In other words, some distinction has in any case to be made between the final writer of the Gospel and the earliest tradition upon which he

worked; and Wendling has indicated the criteria which such a distinction must employ. Von Soden's division of the Markan material into a Petrine and a later source amounts to the same thing. The two critics do not differ very greatly about the passages which they regard as secondary. Von Soden's Petrine narrative does not differ greatly from Wendling's $M^1 + M^2$. But the line of demarcation between M^1 and M^2 , and Wendling's reasons for drawing this, are not as self-evident as the line which Wendling and Von Soden agree in drawing between the earlier document, or source, and the work of the evangelist.

A tabulation of the results shows the following agreements and disagreements between Von Soden's Petrine narrative and Wendling's $M^1 + M^2$.

Von Soden: 1 4-11 16-20 21-39 2 1-28

Wendling: 1 4-14^a 16-34^a 35-39^a 40-44 2 1-15^a 16^b-17 18^b 19^b 21-28

Von Soden: 3 1-6 13-19 21-35 4 1-9 21-32

Wendling: 3 1-5 20 21 31-35 4 1-9 26-29 33 35-41 5 1-42 43^b

Von Soden: 6 6-16 8 27-38 9 1 33-40

Wendling: 6 14 17-30 32-44 8 27-30^a 33^b 36 37 9 2-8 14-27

Von Soden: 10 13-45

Wendling: 10 1 13-23 25 31 32^a 35-37 41-52 11 1-10 15-17 27^b-33

Von Soden: 12 13-44 13 1-6 28-37

Wendling: 12 1-14^a 14^c-31 34^b-37 13 1-2 28-29 33-36

Wendling: 14 1-7 10-20 22-35^a 36-37 39-41^a 42-56 60-62^a 63-72 15 1-38 40-43
46-47 16 1-7^a 8

The comparison shows Wendling's analysis to be much more complex than Von Soden's. This results from his separation of his main document into two strands. It also shows that Wendling assigns considerably more to $M^1 + M^2$ than Von Soden gives to his Petrine source. This Wendling can afford to do, since he supposes two documents instead of one. The matter assigned by Von Soden to the Petrine source is in part assigned by Wendling to M^1 and in part to M^2 . Of the 177 verses assigned by Von Soden to his Petrine tradition, up to 13 37 (where it comes to an end), Wendling assigns about 124 to M^1 and only 10 to M^2 . Though he assigns some verses to M^1 which Von Soden

does not give to the Petrine source, and omits some (assigning them to Ev) which Von Soden does so assign, yet up to 13³⁷ the M¹ of Wendling agrees very closely with the Petrine source of Von Soden. After 13³⁷ the material assigned to M¹ and M² is about equally divided between them. Wendling makes no claims for the Petrine origin of his M¹ or M², but after these are subtracted from the whole Gospel there is a smaller amount left for the work of Ev than remains after Von Soden's Petrine source is subtracted. Since Wendling distinguishes between two sources and the work of a redactor, and Von Soden only between the Petrine tradition and other matter, this result also is what would be expected.

The relatively great agreement of the results of these two independent investigations seems to prove that it is possible to distinguish an earlier and a later tradition in the Gospel. Beyond this, the difference between Von Soden and Wendling is that the former makes no assertion about the identity of the final editor with the writer who recorded the Petrine tradition (and so permits the view that one hand wrote the whole Gospel, though part of his tradition went back to Peter and part came from later sources), while the latter asserts that Ev was a different person from either M¹ or M². Is this latter position of Wendling's capable of proof or disproof?

Perhaps the simplest criterion, and the one to be most safely applied, is that of vocabulary. Sir John Hawkins in his *Horae Synopticae* has compiled a list of 41 words which he regards as characteristic of Mark. Do these words occur indiscriminately in M¹, M², and Ev, or are they confined, some of them to M¹, some to M², and some to Ev? Or is there sufficient difference in the frequency with which these words occur in the three strata to justify the assumption of three different authors, and especially that Ev was distinct from the writers of the two documents? If not, the division between earlier and later material in Mark may still stand, while it was yet one and the same writer who put the whole Gospel together out of these earlier and later materials.

Characteristic of Mark is the historical present. Hawkins finds one hundred and fifty-one examples of this use in Mark as

against seventy-eight in Matthew (twenty-one of these taken from Mark) and four in Luke.⁹ Of these one hundred and fifty-one historical presents in Mark, forty-nine occur in passages assigned by Wendling to M¹, sixty-nine in M², and thirty-three in Ev.

Of the peculiarly Markan words, some prove nothing in this connection. *Εὐαγγέλιον* is used only by Ev (seven times). But since Wendling uses this word as a criterion of Ev's work in six out of the seven passages where it occurs, this adds nothing to the proof. **Ἀλαλος* is used once by M¹, twice by M², and not at all by Ev. But since Ev adds no story of a deaf man, he has no occasion to use the word. (He does add a story of a stammering man, where he uses the word *μογιλάλος*.) *Κλάσμα*, used once by M² and three times by Ev, signifies little; since the three uses in Ev occur in the same passage, and this passage is taken from the passage in M² (the feeding of the multitude). *Στραχύς* occurs three times, all in M¹, but this also signifies nothing, since no passage in which it could occur is assigned to M² or Ev. **Ἐκπορεύομαι* is used twice each by M¹ and M², and seven times by Ev; but since five of these seven occurrences are in the same passage, they cannot establish any particular fondness for this word on the part of Ev as against the other two. **Ἀκάθαρτος*, three times in M¹, four times in M², and three times in Ev; *ἀπὸ μακρόθεν*, three times in M² and twice in Ev; *δδαχή*, three times in M², twice in Ev; and *φέρω*, five times in M¹, eight in M², and twice in Ev, do nothing toward establishing a distinct vocabulary for any one of the three.

Only three words seem to tell at all in favor of Wendling's hypothesis: *εἰσπορεύομαι* occurs once in M¹, twice in M², and five times, in separated passages, in Ev; *διαστέλλομαι* is used four times by Ev, in four different and separated passages, and not by M¹ or M²; **ἐκθαμβέομαι* occurs four times in M², in three different chapters, and not in M¹ or Ev. But the absence of the third of these words can certainly, and of the second probably, be accounted for by the subject-matter.

There is here practically no evidence of distinct vocabularies. And even if there were more than there is, it would be fully offset

⁹ Not including parables, where the present is not historical.

by the use of words having no necessary or natural connection with any particular subject-matter, and therefore equally likely to occur in any part of the gospel. Five such words are the adverbs *εὐθύς*, *πάλιν*, *πολλά*, *οὐκέτι*, *οὐπώ*. Of these, the first (Mark's favorite and most characteristic word) is used seventeen times by M¹, fifteen by M², and ten by Ev. Considering the amount of narrative material ascribed to the three respectively, this usage seems to indicate an equal fondness for this word among them. The second (*πάλιν*) is used ten times by M¹, eight times by M², and nine times by Ev; *πολλά* (used adverbially) occurs three times in M¹, six in M², and three in Ev; *οὐκέτι* occurs twice in M¹, twice in M², three times in Ev; *οὐπώ* is used once by M¹ and four times by Ev.

Characteristic of Mark is also his use of the imperfects *ἔλεγεν* and *ἔλεγον*. They are found fourteen times in M¹, fifteen in M², and twenty-one in Ev.

The cumulative effect of the above study makes strongly against Wendling's hypothesis of three different writers for Mark. At the very least, it shows that confirmatory evidence is entirely lacking where it would be most easily found and most convincing, while to those who cannot believe that three different writers should have had the same partiality for the same peculiar words it will be regarded as practically disproving the assumption that there were three authors.